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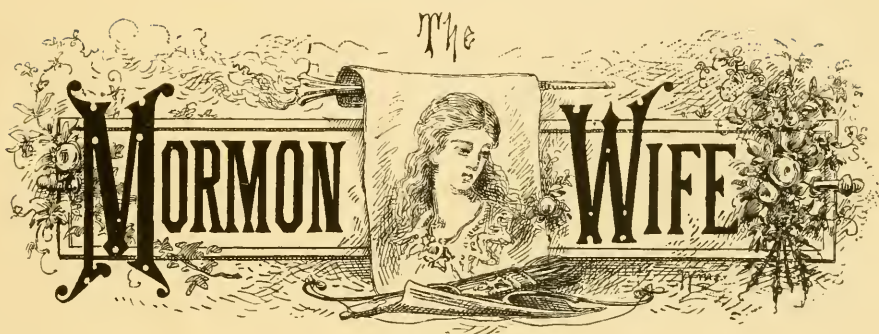
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THE LAMENT OF
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THE LAMENT
OF
THE MORMON WIFE.

A POEM

BY

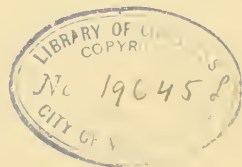
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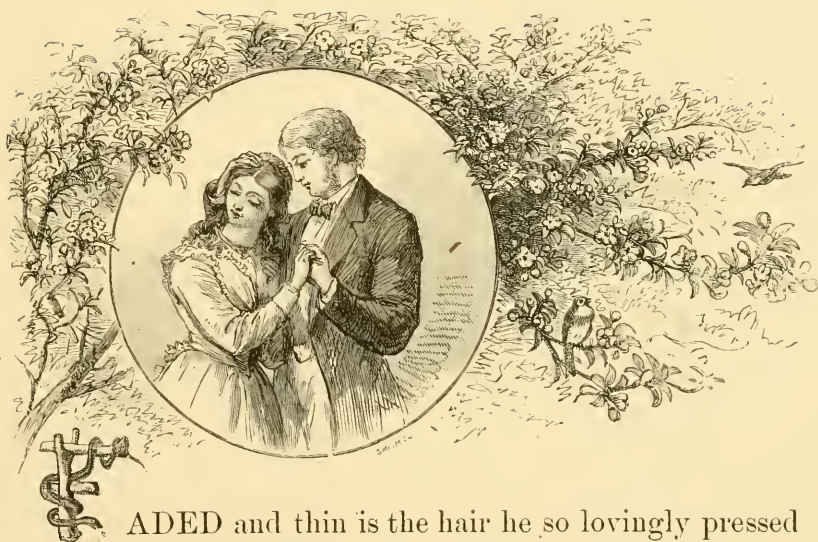
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THE LAMENT OF THE MORMON WIFE.



AGED and thin is the hair he so lovingly pressed
From my girlish brow, that twilight in happy May ;
“Sweetheart,” he said, “your hair outshines the light in the
west ;”

Golden hair and golden sunset,—both are gray.



THE LAMENT OF THE MORMON WIFE.

'Twas then he set this ring on my hand, as he murmured
low,

Words that come back to me sweet and sad as my mother's
funeral hymn :

“Dear hand, it shall guide me forevermore as now !”

It is coarse with time and toil ; it has lost its hold on him.

I think the sunsets now, are not so sweet and bright ;

The sun dies now in the west, and his smile is sickly and
worn,

Looking back o'er a waste of sand ; it was such a different
light

That hand in hand we watched 'neath the blossoming thorn.

Oh that Northern village ! how sheltered and calm it lay

At the foot of the green old mountain, nestling low.

Home of my wedded love ; as fair and far away

It seems, as a city in Heaven to a toiling wretch below.

How happy we were ! and I know that I was dear

To him as his soul. I saw the shadow rise—

Small at first as my hand, but growing day by day,

As the smooth-faced saint beguiled him with honeyed lies.

THE LAMENT OF THE MORMON WIFE.

But I was to be his own true wife to the end ;
 “ Never but one,”—in this he was firm as a rock.
Of course he should have his way ; oh ! a noble friend
 Was he ; too wise to frighten her with an untimely shock.



Would I follow him ? Yes, in a frail raft o'er the sea ;
 Or a savage's hut—or a Bedouin's roving tent ;
What mattered it ? he was so dear, so dear to me,
 That my heart, my life, would go with him where'ere he
 went.



THE LAMENT OF THE MORMON WIFE.

But the years I spent while the shadow day by day
Hung black above my head like a threatening doom ;

The years I strove to thrust it with
my weak hands away,
And marked it still descending,
descending over my home.



And at last it fell! The shadow that
long had frowned o'er me,
It fell; and I think my heart was
benumbed with the blow ;
Or perhaps 'twas the look of a dove
in her eyes ; or maybe
I had no room in my heart for hate,
but only for woe.

For I could not hate her, so sweet
was her angel face ;
She was only an innocent child,
and he won her love ;

And I knew too well—too well, what it was to place
His smile above all things, below, above.



THE LAMENT OF THE MORMON WIFE.

But like me, she had her day ; I saw her dove-like eyes
 Turn into the look of a hunted doe at bay ;
When a haughty beauty with her dark, bold gaze,
 Won his fickle heart from the English lass away.

And she holds him well ; I fancy no “ dream ” will come,
 No “ holy revelation ” he fears to wrong,
Bidding him take a fourth wife to his home ;
 She has a will that, if not saintly, is strong.

I am glad the pretty English flower is at rest
 In a balmier land than lies 'neath her own blue skies ,
For never a storm will vex her in the vast
 And sheltered valleys of God's own Paradise.

To die of a broken heart,—that were too absurd !
 ‘Twas a low and stubborn fever of which she died ;
Against the holy faith she never spoke a word ;
 And her husband and his new wife watched faithfully by
 her side.

THE LAMENT OF THE MORMON WIFE.



Though they said that at last she drew her hands away
Even from him, and clasped them so wan and thin;
And the old nurse said she bent to hear her pray:
“Oh God, for Christ’s sake, forgive this Christless sin.

What sent these thoughts to me in my lonely attic room
Where no step but mine falls through the night and day?
Perhaps ’twas because I heard through the twilight gloom,
His voice in the garden below with his boys at play.

Their mother leaned from the porch to answer their merry
call,
With a smile that made her proud face womanly and soft;
And they are two handsome lads;—when I go to the servants’
hall
For my daily dole of bread and meat, I have met them oft.

THE LAMENT OF THE MORMON WIFE.



As their father chased them with laughter adown the
winding walk, ~

Pelting them with red roses so gay this golden even',
Did a murmur reach him through their childish talk,
Of our baby's voice that is singing now in Heaven ?

THE LAMENT OF THE MORMON WIFE.

Had that child lived, I should not have been so lone ;
Sitting here in my vacant room he would come to me,
A great tall lad, with his eyes of honest brown ;
Cheering my desolate heart with his sympathy.

Though sometimes, I am glad he is safe within
The jasper gates that shut us so far apart ;
With his father's tender ways he will never win
Some woman's love, only to break her heart.

But it is this wife, with her beauty and subtle art ;
I like to think it is she who has poisoned his mind
Against me, for he had an affectionate heart
Before he became a saint ; he was very gentle and kind.

If I thought he would change, would come to me at last
And say : " Oh love, forgive me that my weak heart roved ;"
Forgive ! Oh, in my happy tears I would wash out the past,
And love him better than ever man was loved.

THE LAMENT OF THE MORMON WIFE.



But it will not be, I shall dwell here alone till I die ;
And some day my soul will fly from its prison bars
Over the dreary desert ; I suppose that Heaven is as nigh ;
But I wonder if I can be happy without him above the
stars.

THE LAMENT OF THE MORMON WIFE.

For I think this parting is final; he will not be mine again,
For they say there is no giving in marriage there above;
And should he and his three wives meet on the Heavenly
plain,
Effaced by his fresher affections would be his old—time
love.

If God would only let us change our natures at will;
If I had no heart I could better act my part;
Deserted, unloved wife, yet loving him, loving him still!
I think that a modern saint is better without a heart.



When I die—what other hope do I have—he may come at
last;
Perhaps he may even lay his hand on my brow
When 'tis cold, and say: "It is long since past,
But she was dear to me in the long ago."

THE LAMENT OF THE MORMON WIFE.

It seems as if I should know if he stood by my side ;

Should feel on my face, did they fall, his remorseful tears ;
That his voice, if loving,—no matter how long since I died—
Would waken my heart from the silent sleep of years.

But loveless, lonely dreamer, who will not be comforted ;

Of what avail is it to murmur, to moan, or to cry ;
The peacefulest rest, I think, is the sleep of the dead,
When the day is past, and the darkness is over the sky.



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